

The year 1898 marked a turning point in violent race relations across the country. At the same time Wilmington was dealing with its violence, Phoenix, South Carolina underwent a violent episode in which at least 13 men, including one white man, were killed by white mobs. After Wilmington's riot, followed closely in the press throughout the country, other states experienced similar unrest within a short span of time. Within 25 years of Wilmington's riot, at least six other major race riots occurred throughout the country in which blacks lost their lives, property, and experienced ever tightening controls on their rights. In all cases, the numbers of black dead were never fully tallied with estimates ranging from as few as seven dead in the Springfield, Illinois riot to as many as 500 injured in Chicago. Massive property damage and a mass exodus of blacks also followed.⁹²

Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 63 (August 1997), 553-590.

⁹² The riots in chronological order: Atlanta, GA (1906), Springfield, IL (1908), East St. Louis, IL (1917), Chicago, IL (1919), Tulsa, OK (1921), Rosewood, FL (1923). Ray Stannard Baker, *Following the Colour Line: An Account of Negro Citizenship in the American Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1908); Charles Crowe, "Racial Violence and Social Reform: Origins of the Atlanta Riot of 1906," *Journal of Negro History* 53 (July 1968): 234-256; Charles Crowe, "Racial Massacre in Atlanta September 22, 1906," *Journal of Negro History* 54 (April 1969): 150-173; Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Allison Dorsey, *To Build Our Lives Together: Community Formation in Black Atlanta, 1875-1906* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004); Gregory Mixon, *The Atlanta Riot: Race, Class, and Violence in a New South City* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing a Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race Reparations, and Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); R. Thomas

The Atlanta Riot of 1906 closely resembled the building tensions and outbreak of violence in Wilmington. Atlanta had struggled to recover from the Civil War and re-invent itself as a "New South" city. Attempts to revitalize the city faltered until the turn of the twentieth century and the violence in 1906 reflected growing tension between whites and blacks regarding segregated public spaces. The white rioters focused their attention on destruction of the upwardly mobile, successful black businessmen of the city. Additional impetus for the violence was linked to reports of black-on-white sexual assault.⁹³

Although Georgia and Atlanta had experienced numerous lynchings, the violence in 1906 broke with tradition as white leaders looked to the model established by Wilmington's white leaders as they forced black businessmen from the city and took political control of the city. In fact, during political rallies, gubernatorial candidate Hoke Smith explicitly indicated

Dye, "The Rosewood Massacre: History and the Making of Public Policy," *The Public Historian* 19 (Summer 1997): 25-39; Maxine D. Jones, "The Rosewood Massacre and the Women Who Survived It," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 76 (Fall 1997): 193-208; Phillip S. Foner, *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1619-1973* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 136-7, 144.

⁹³ Don Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 13, 34-37, 318; Gregory Mixon, *The Atlanta Riot: Race, Class, and Violence in a New South City* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 86; Charles Crowe, "Racial Violence and Social Reform: Origins of the Atlanta Riot of 1906," *Journal of Negro History* 53 (July 1968), 158, 236; Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pg. 124-126, 178-179; Allison Dorsey, *To Build Our Lives Together: Community Formation in Black Atlanta, 1875-1906* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 159.